Students' reflections in teaching practicum: A case study of EFL pre-service teachers

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Abstract

The importance of reflection in enhancing teachers' professional development has been widely acknowledged. Yet, little is known about how EFL pre-service teachers do reflection and how they perceive reflective practice as one of the tools to improve their professional development. The current study attempts to address this gap by investigating how EFL pre-service teachers reflect on their teaching performances and perceive their reflective practices. Employing a qualitative case study, the study involved six teacher candidates who were taking microteaching. The data were gathered from an open-ended questionnaire made by the author, journal writing, participants' analysis on the videos of their teaching performances, and an interview with each participant. To triangulate the data, classroom observations and document analysis were also conducted. The obtained data were analyzed thematically based on emerging themes. The findings show that the participants did reflections in different stages of their teaching performances, reflecting on the surface level. In terms of how they view a reflection, the research participants perceive a reflection as a good practice because it gives them opportunities to look back and scrutinize what they did during their teaching practicum.

Keywords: reflection; pre-service teachers; teaching practicum

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The term reflection or reflective practice is not something new in the area of teaching and education. In the literature, Dewey (1933) has been considered as the first person who coined the term reflection (Chacón, 2018). According to Dewey (1933), reflection is an active process of looking at oneself to make something better. The term reflection to date has been defined and applied in many ways (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Loughran, 2002). Loughran (2002), for example, argues that reflection can simply mean thinking about something. It can also have a specific meaning and has something to do with action. Reflection can then be viewed as a continuum. Despite the various interpretations, a review shares one thing in common: it has something to do with a problem (Chacón, 2018; Loughran, 2002). Jay and Johnson (2002) conclude that all reflection is similar in its purpose: to describe what and how teachers think about their practice on how to foster effective learning. In this current study, a reflection means a process of looking into what the research participants do and make decisions on their teaching activities as well as figuring out what to improve in their next teaching practices.

The importance of reflection in enhancing teachers' professional development has been widely acknowledged and researched (Farrell, 2018; Lamb, 2017; Lee, 2008; Lubis, 2018; Nguyen & Ngo, 2018; Zulfikar & Mujiburrahman, 2018). Research suggests that both beginning and well-experienced teachers can improve their understanding of their teaching by conducting a conscious and systematic reflection on their teaching experiences (Borg, 2003; Farrell, 2007; Ferraro, 2000; Jay & Johnson, 2002). One reason for this is that through reflections, teachers can identify their strengths and weaknesses as teachers and find solutions to the problems they encounter in their teaching and plan for making changes that are useful for improving their teaching practices. Reflection ideally should then be one of the routines that teachers need to do to enhance their professional development.

Along with the importance of reflection for teachers' professional development, reflections should be a part of teachers' routines. According to Valdez et al. (2018), reflection can be viewed as an essential component for effective teaching. It is also a tool for enhancing teachers' teaching expertise (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017). In the same vein, Ferraro (2000) argues that teachers benefit from doing reflective practice since they could understand more about how they teach, which can ultimately lead them to become effective teachers.

With this in mind, reflective thinking correlates with the idea of improving teachers' capability for regulating themselves.

In line with the importance of reflective practice, there has been abundant research related to reflective practice in various contexts such as in English language teaching (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019; Lee, 2008; Valdez et al., 2018), teaching English to speakers of other languages (Eickhoff & De Costa, 2018; Farrell, 2016; Nguyen & Ngo, 2018), and in English as a foreign language (Cirocki & Farrelly, 2016; Fakazli & Kuru Gönen, 2017; Rozimela & Tiarina, 2018; Uştuk & De Costa, 2020). In an EFL context like Indonesia, for example, being professional is one expectation for being teachers in the 21st century (Norahmi, 2017). Since doing reflection is one of the ways to enhance professionalism, research on reflective practices becomes vital to be conducted. While there has been much research on reflective practices in EFL contexts, little is known about how reflection EFL teachers reflect on their teaching, suggesting the need to explore this issue further.

Within the teacher education field, a reflection has also attracted the attention of researchers. Much research has highlighted the usefulness of reflection for pre-service teachers (Kuru Gonen, 2016; Lee, 2008; Loughran, 1996, 2002; Rozimela & Tiarina, 2018; Shoffner, 2009; Walkington, 2005). In English as a foreign language (henceforth, EFL), there has also been a growing interest in the impact of reflective practice on the development of teaching skills of the teacher candidates (Rozimela & Tiarina, 2018). The findings of the study by Rozimela and Tiarina (2018), for example, indicate that a reflection improves the participants' skills in teaching. Further, they suggest that reflective practice should be part of a teacher education program.

While few studies have been conducted in EFL pre-service teaching contexts, little is known about how EFL teacher candidates do reflections and how they perceive their reflective activities. The current study attempts to address this gap by investigating how EFL pre-service reflects their teaching practices and how they perceive their reflective activities. Thus, the study is significant because it provides insights about how EFL pre-service teachers reflect and perceive their reflective activities, which adds the existing literature on reflective practice, especially in EFL contexts.

METHOD

Research Design

In line with the study's intent, which is to uncover how EFL pre-service teachers do a reflection and how they perceive their reflective practices, a qualitative case study is employed. As a case study deals with finding answers to why and how questions (Yin, 2018), the current study employs a case study as its methodology. A case study is deemed appropriate as the researcher is interested in gaining depth information about how a group of EFL teacher candidates reflects on their teaching activities during microteaching at a university setting.

Participants

The participants were chosen purposively and conveniently. The participants' demographic information is shown in Table 1. All the six pre-service teachers who took microteaching were asked to join the study at the beginning of the class, where the researcher was the class instructor. While this kind of power relation between the researcher and the participants seems to force the participants to participate in the study, they were aware of it and were willing to join the research. The researcher also explained that their participation in the study was not going to affect their grades in the microteaching class and free to withdraw from the study.

Additionally, as part of being reflexive, which is one of the components of the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), the researcher tried to put aside her assumptions on how pre-service teachers do reflexes in the current study. The researcher also did not interfere the participants as they did their thoughts on their teaching performances. Furthermore, only initial names (AR, DD, FW, IT, LC, PP) are used in this paper to protect participants' identities.

Table 1. Participant demographic information

Initials	Gender	Age	Year of study	Teaching experience
AR	Male	21	3 rd year	Private English course
DD	Female	20	3 rd year	No
FW	Female	20	3 rd year	Private English course
IT	Male	20	3 rd year	No
LC	Female	21	3 rd year	No
PP	Female	20	3 rd year	No

Additionally, since not all research participants were familiar with reflective practice and how to do it, the researcher did some research steps. In the first three microteaching meetings, the researcher introduced the participants to the idea of reflective practice, explained why it is essential for teachers, and modeled how to do a reflection. In the fourth meeting, the data collection was started. In this phase, the research participants began their teaching demonstrations in 20-30 minutes. Each of their teaching presentations was recorded, and the file was shared with the research participants.

Data Collection and Tools

The data were obtained within a semester through an open-ended questionnaire, journal writing, classroom observations, an interview, and document analysis to answer the research questions. The open-ended questionnaire was used to obtain information related to participants' initial understanding of the reflective practice. It contained two items: what do you know about reflective practices?, and in your opinion, how important are reflections for teachers? The questionnaire was distributed at the beginning of the microteaching class. In order to know how the participants in the current study do reflections, journal writing was used to obtain information about how student teachers in this study do reflections. Classroom observation and document analysis in the forms of teacher candidates' lesson plans were used to match whether the pre-service teachers taught based on their lesson plans and to know whether there was an indication of reflection in action during the teaching demonstrations. The last data tool was an interview, which was done to learn more about how the pre-service teachers reflected and how they perceived their reflection. The interview was a semi-structure interview where the researcher could ask more questions in the interview.

Journal writing is one of the primary data, which is considered appropriate as one of the tools for reflective practice (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). In applying journal writing as a tool to collect the data, the researcher assigned each pre-service teacher in microteaching to write a journal manually in a book as soon as he/she finished each teaching presentation. In the journal, the participants were required to write how they feel when teaching to their peers, and how they make decisions in reaction to the class situation at the time of his/her teaching presentation. In total, there were three journals for each participant to write. This was done to identify what was going on in the participants' minds before, during, and after teaching their peers.

Another primary data collection tool is video analysis that is done by the teacher candidates. Video analysis is one of the tools for doing reflective practice (Farrell, 2018; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Wetzel et al., 2017) is deemed appropriate for this study. Since the participants were still learning to teach, doing reflective practice through analyzing their teaching performance videos helps them remember what they did in the classroom. To obtain this type of data, each pre-service teacher's teaching presentation was video recorded and analyzed by each participant. The pre-service teachers were instructed to examine each of their teaching performances by thinking of why they decide to do particular activities in their teaching presentation by analyzing each of their teaching activities. This video analysis is intended to gain insights about how the teacher candidates reflect on their teaching performance and their ideas on how to improve their practice for the next teaching presentation. In total, there were three video analyses that each participant did.

The classroom observation, which is another tool of data collection, was done by the researcher to triangulate the data that were collected from the research participants. During the classroom observations, the researcher wrote notes on each participant's teaching presentation. The researcher also collected and analyzed participants' lesson plans to know whether they did their teaching demonstration based on their lesson plans. As soon as the microteaching was finished, the researcher interviewed each pre-service teacher. This was done to gain further information about how participants did reflections and how they perceived their reflective activities that were not explicitly written in their journal writing and video analysis.

Data Analysis

The obtained data were analyzed qualitatively using a constant comparative method (Corbin et al., 2008). In doing so, the author compared the data from multiple sources such as from journal writing, video analyses, observations, and interviews to see whether the emerging themes are similar across different data sources. The data from journal writing and video analysis were first read carefully. The next stage was codifying the data by putting labels. While the codes were applied in words, the labels were put on the groups of words coded earlier. The titles that were put more first were then grouped into categories. When several types are grouped into a larger group containing similar information, a theme can then be identified. Simultaneously, the data from classroom observations in the forms of field notes and interviews

were also coded and categorized to see whether the emerging themes similar to the existing themes; the interviews were first transcribed.

FINDINGS

From the data analysis, two emerging themes were identified. The first theme is pre-service teachers' reflection, and the second theme is teacher's perception toward their reflective practices. Each of the main themes is elaborated.

Pre-service Teachers' Reflections on Their Teaching Activities

This main theme, which is answering the first research question, is identified based on the analysis of multiple data sources. The findings related to how pre-service teachers reflect on their teaching show that the research participants in the current study did reflective practices in various teaching stages. Their reflections can be grouped into three categories: the timing, the level, and the foci of their reflections. More detailed findings can be summarized as followed.

The timing of reflections

Data from journal writing indicate that pre-service teachers in the study did reflections in every teaching stage, such as before, during, and after teaching. The reflection before teaching is related to how pre-service teachers prepare their teaching. The reflection during the teaching is concerned with shifting plans in the middle of teaching activities. The reflection after teachers is related to what the teacher candidates reflect upon finishing their teaching activities. The timing of the reflection is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of the timing of reflection for each participant

Participant's name	Before teaching	During teaching	After teaching
AR	√	√	√
DD	√	√	√
FW			√
IT		√	√
LC		√	√
PP	√		√

Data from journal writing indicates that all the participants listed what they did before they taught the students. The preparation included creating lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, other teaching media, and anticipating

what would happen in the classroom. The participants' concern related to their feeling was mostly the case for their first teaching demonstration, which is indicated from participants' journal writing. PP, for example, wrote, "Before I teach, I prepare my materials and media that I will use in my class. At that time, I felt a little bit nervous because I did not know what will happen during the teaching and learning process". Another participant, AR, also mentioned that he was nervous about his lesson plan. He spent a lot of time asking his friends to give feedback on his lesson plan.

Additionally, he was concerned with his feeling. He was afraid that the students would not be able to understand what he was going to teach. Another participant, DD, was also concerned with their nervous feeling. In the first teaching performance, DD was not familiar with three other students in the class. Thus, she was nervous and was always thinking about what she should do in her teaching performance.

In addition to doing reflections before teaching, the pre-service teachers in the study were reflective during their teaching performances. While not all students explicitly mentioned that they did reflections when they were teaching, data from classroom observation and pre-service teachers' lesson plans indicate that students made changes in their goals and did some improvisation in their teaching. This clearly shows that pre-service teachers made some instant decisions while teaching. DD, for example, claimed that she had many ideas to demonstrate or to present her lesson plan, but then the thoughts disappeared as she started teaching. In her journal writing, she wrote, "Previously I have so many ideas to demonstrate in my lesson plan and what I should do, but when I come to the front of the class all of my ideas to demonstrate my lesson plan disappeared." Another participant, AR, also demonstrated teaching activities that were different from his lesson plan. Data from classroom observation and matching it with the lesson plans indicate that AR made instant changes in his teaching. For example, in AR's lesson plan, he planned to focus on teaching students how to greet each other. Yet, in teaching, he called on two students to interview each other without giving a connection and a guideline on what to focus on the interview.

While most of the participants were not aware of the reflections they did during the teaching demonstration, one participant, LC, was mindful of her reflection during her teaching. Furthermore, she did not just list what she did in her thought, but she included her reasons why she made spontaneous actions in her teaching, as shown in the following excerpt from her journal writing:

Actually, in my lesson plan, in teaching material, I asked the students to answer some questions in their worksheet(s). And then I ask(ed) them to rewrite their answer on (the)whiteboard. But unfortunately, because of my carelessness, I forgot to bring the board marker. So, instead of asking them to read their work on the whiteboard, I ask(ed) them to read it in front of the class.

(LC, journal writing 1)

As shown in the excerpt, LC did a reflection during her teaching, and she was aware of it. She explicitly wrote the reasons why she shifted to a different activity when her initial plan did not work in her journal, even though she did not mention the purpose of shifting activities in the class.

Finally, journal writing data also indicate that participants reflect on their teaching activities after they had their teaching demonstrations. From analyzing participants' journals, it is found that all the participants made reflections after their teaching practice. The participants did reflections mostly after they finished their teaching demonstration, which highlighted their feeling, as shown in the following excerpt:

Becoming the first presenter to demonstrate my lesson plan was not easy for me. I was so nervous and afraid of making mistakes. Previously I had so many ideas to show or present my lesson plan and what I should do, but when I came to the front of the class, all my ideas to demonstrate my lesson plan disappeared. I think my opening was good enough. I greeted my friends, who became my students at that time. I asked them to pray before studying. All went well in the opening, although I forgot to ask about her attendance even though I have written it in my list. The presentation went well, but there were so many things I missed. I was uncomfortable, and I was really nervous about doing it. I was given 20 minutes, but I did it all too fast. I wish I can do it better in the next performance.

(DD, journal writing 1)

As shown in the above excerpt, DD reflected her teaching performances upon finishing her teaching. Her reflection at this stage of teaching covered what she felt and what she did in her teaching from the beginning until the end of her teaching. While DD's reflection only focused on listing what she did in her teaching, examinations after teaching done by other participants included plans

and participants' hope to do better in the next teaching performance as indicated in the following excerpt:

After I finished my teaching demonstration, I remember that I should let the students ask me anything or ask them whether they understood my explanation. I wish I can do better for my next performance and do my best for my teaching examination.
(PP, journal writing 2)

In the above excerpt, PP was also concerned with her wish to be better in her next teaching performance, which was for her microteaching examination. Like PP, another teacher candidate, AR, also made reflection after teaching, which highlighted wishes to improve his next teaching performance, as indicated in the excerpt below.

I finished teaching to my students when they were about to know more than I taught. In the next teaching practice, I will change some of the ways of how I teach to my students. For example, in the way I behave in front of my students, give another task that is interesting to my student, and prepare myself in front of my students.
(AR, journal writing 1)

From several excerpts related to reflections after the teaching demonstrations above, it can be identified that participants made reflections after their teaching demonstration. Even though the reasons behind their reflections are not always clear, the participants listed things which they hoped to happen and things they missed, as well as things they needed to improve in their next teaching demonstrations. While some of them did not explicitly explain why they did the reflections, they were all able to identify their weaknesses and their teaching demonstrations.

Unlike reflections after each teaching demonstration, reflections after the end of the microteaching indicate differences in the reflections' focus. The data from the interview indicate that most participants were concerned with improving their whole teaching performances as they anticipate their upcoming teaching practicum at school settings. They were aware that teaching practicum at school was going to be more challenging than microteaching. Table 3 shows a summary of the participants' concerns at the end of the microteaching class.

Table 3. Summary of participation finishing data microteaching

Participant's name	Concerns
AR	Teaching materials
DD	Teaching techniques
FW	Teaching techniques
IT	Teaching materials
LC	Teaching media
PP	Teaching media

As indicated in Table 3, of the six participants, two of them were concerned with teaching techniques. Two others focused on preparing teaching materials. The rest two participants were concerned with using more teaching media for their upcoming teaching practicum at school settings. It can then be concluded that the participants' concerns upon the accomplishment of microteaching were related to teaching materials and methodology.

The levels of reflections

While it is clearly shown in the obtained data that pre-service teachers did reflections in different stages of their teaching, their reflections were mostly on the surface level, in the sense that they did not provide their reasons for what they did in each teaching stage. The following excerpt from video analysis indicates that the participant, PP, just listed what she did in the classroom:

In my performance, I believe that I was already good at starting the class. But in my explanation, I did not explain the material clearly. I think in a real classroom, my students will get confused. I need to explain in detail about the material to make students understand easily. I will also take a few minutes to let my students think or ask questions to make sure they know what I am saying. In the future, I will pay more attention to my explanation. I also think that I am too often smiling during the class, and I am afraid if my students think I am not serious in teaching. I hope I can do it better in my next performance.

(PP, video analysis of the 1st teaching demonstration)

As shown in the above excerpt, PP mentioned what she had done well and what she needed to improve. Yet, she did not explain why she did or did not do in the classroom. She simply listed what she did and plans to do in the future teaching performance. This kind of reflection shows that PP's level of reflection is still shallow. A Similar type of reflection is also shown in the second

presentation done by another participant, DD, as shown in the following excerpt:

This is my second performance to teach the students. But it is not a big class; it is just a small class that consists of 5 students, and all of the students are my friends. So, I do not feel nervous about teaching. I prepare the material and the assignment with the technique to teach. Because of my last experience, I got some comments from my friends about what I should improve, so I prepared well than before.

(DD, video analysis of the 2nd teaching performance)

Similar to reflection on the 1st teaching performance done by PP in the previous excerpt, in the above excerpt, DD just listed what she did in the classroom in her second teaching demonstration even though the participant has experience in doing reflection in the previous teaching demonstration. This shallow level of reflection continues in the third teaching demonstration, as indicated in the following excerpt:

I felt better in my third performance; I was still nervous, but not like my previous performance. Like usual, I start(ed) my class with greetings and ask(ed) their attendance, but I forgot to start the class by praying together. I taught for Senior High School level in my third performance. I chose daily life conversation by play(ing) the role in the dialogue. I saw that my student(s) did not understand enough about my instruction. I saw that maybe they are a little bit confused. So, I tried to reexplain my lesson plan until they understood. In my last learning process, the class was going quite well, but there was some mistake(s) when my student(s) answer(ed) the worksheet I distributed to them because I made a wrong question, and they couldn't answer it because the answer was not there.

(LC, video analysis of the 3rd teaching performance)

The excerpt above shows that the participant, LC, still listed what she did in her teaching even though she had her teaching demonstrations three times. This indicates that this particular pre-service teacher still did reflections in the shallow level. While the participant reflected on what she felt and what she should do but did not do it in her teaching, she did not mention the reasons, confirming that their reflection level has not moved to a critical level.

From the above three excerpts that represent three different teaching performances done by various teacher candidates in the current study, it can be concluded that pre-service teachers reflect on their teaching at the surface level. All the participants just listed what they did in the classroom without thinking further about their reasons for doing activities they listed in their reflection.

The foci of the reflections

In addition to the timing and the level of reflection, the data from multiple sources indicate that the teacher candidates in the study focused their reflection on several aspects, such as teaching methodology and lesson planning. For example, in the video analysis, AR revealed he was concerned with how he taught the students or teaching methodology. He wrote, "The teaching that I did was not too bad, but it was also not too good. I thought that, if I would like to be a good teacher to my students, I should have a good method of teaching and mastering the material". Another participant, FW, focused her reflection on several aspects, as shown in the following interview excerpt:

Researcher: What were some of your concerns when you did reflections?

FW: I think I have to learn more. I have to search more about the approach to the techniques to teach the student. I have to search about the interesting material to teach my students, and the most important thing I think I have to learn more about how to make a good lesson plan because it is a guide for me to teach the student.

As indicated in the above excerpt, FW was concerned with finding more teaching techniques, teaching material, and creating lesson plans in her reflections. While the excerpt specifically indicates how this particular participant focused when she did reflections, this provides clues on how other participants were mostly concerned when doing reflections. The summary of the foci of reflection for each research participant is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of the foci of participants' reflections

Participant's name	Foci of the reflections
AR	Lesson plan, teaching technique, feeling,
DD	Teaching technique, feeling
FW	Lesson plan, teaching technique, teaching materials,
IT	Lesson plan, teaching technique, feeling
LC	Lesson plan. Feeling
PP	Teaching technique, feeling

Students' Perception toward Reflective Practice Activities

Data from the questionnaire at the beginning of the class indicates that most participants know what a reflection is. Of the six participants, only two participants had no idea what the reflection means. That was because they never did a reflection before. On the other hand, they knew what a reflection is since they have done a reflection in another class for the other four participants. In responding to the question, "What do you know about reflective practices?" In the questionnaire, the four participants wrote:

- PP: Reflective practice means a way of studying our experiences to improve the way we work. It can also be used to observe and evaluate the way we behave in our classroom.
- FW: Reflective practice is a way of studying our experiences to improve the way we work. The act of reflection is a great way to increase confidence and become a more proactive and qualified professional.
- DD: Reflective practice is a technique or way of studying based on our own experience, and from that experience, we can improve or fix it to make it better.
- LC: It is a concept such as reflection on action and reflection in action that explains professionals meet the challenges of their work with a kind of improvisation to improve through practice.

As shown in the above excerpts from the questionnaire at the beginning of the microteaching class, the study's four participants have known what reflective practices mean. Even though they do not have the same understanding of how

reflection should be done, they know that the goal of reflection is to improve practices.

Concerning the importance of reflective practice for teachers, data from the beginning of the class questionnaire indicates that all the participants, including those who had no idea what a reflection is, claimed that a reflection is very important for teachers. The following excerpts are the participants' responses in answering the question, "How important do you think reflection for a teacher?"

- LC: Reflection is a step to improve our practice. Through reflection, we as educators can look clearly at our efforts and struggles and consider options to change, maybe change for the better. For example, when we fail to deliver our teaching materials in class.
- DD: For a teacher reflection, I think reflection is critical because the reflection is based on the experience, so the teacher will analyze what is wrong or effective or not that technique. So, the teacher can fix it or improve it and do not use the wrong technique again.
- FW: Reflective practice is essential for a teacher. It is a personal tool that a teacher can use to observe and evaluate how they behave in their classroom.
- AR: Reflective practice is essential for teachers because, in the teaching and learning process, teachers need to improve their teaching methods. This can be done through reflection.
- IT: It is very important for me as a teacher to be and teachers in schools.
- PP: I think it is important because the teacher can get benefits from reflections. Reflections can also help the teacher think critically and train a teacher to solve problems in teaching.

The above excerpts indicate that all study participants consider reflection as an essential activity for the teachers. While their responses vary, all of them emphasize the importance of reflective practices for teachers. Overall, it can be

concluded that participants think that reflective practice is vital for teacher professional development.

While the questionnaire at the beginning of the class provides insight into the students' initial opinion on reflective practice, the interview done after the micro-teaching class ended also indicates similarities related to participants' views on reflective practice. This can be indicated in the following interview excerpt.

Researcher: How do you see reflection as you have done it in your microteaching class?

FW: I think it is something good because we can know our weaknesses and the strengths that we have to keep it or maybe improve more.

The above excerpt shows that one of the participants, FW, still has a similarly positive impression toward reflective practices. It has been done during the microteaching class as she had at the beginning of the microteaching class. This positive impression is also indicated in the following excerpt from another participant:

Researcher: In microteaching, you practiced doing reflections, right? How do you think of those activities?

IT: The activities of reflections, especially analyzing the video, helped me remember what I did in my teaching. From watching the video, I can see my weaknesses and strengths, and I do not have to rely on my friends' comments.

As indicated in the above excerpt, For IT, another research participant, the activity of reflection, particularly from analyzing the video, helped him remember what he did in his teaching performance. From viewing his teaching video, he could see his weaknesses and strengths, and he did not have to rely on his friends' comments.

Overall, the participants' perception toward the activity of reflection is positive, in which they consider a reflection as a way to make improvements in their teaching practice. Additionally, they think that conducting reflections is important for teachers to improve their practices and be better teachers. The summary of the participants' views on reflective practices is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The summary of pre-service teachers' perception of reflective practices

Participant's name	Perception of their reflective practices	The importance of reflective practices for teachers
AR	Something good	Important
DD	Good activity	Very important
FW	Something good	Very important
IT	Good activity	Very important
LC	Something good	Very important
PP	Something good	Important

DISCUSSION

In relation to how teacher candidates do reflections, the findings indicate that student teachers in the study do reflections in different time frames such as before, during, and after the teaching activities. The different timing of the reflections can be viewed as an indication that the pre-service teachers in the study were trying to apply what they know about reflective practices. They view reflection as an essential component of becoming teachers. The different timing in doing reflection can be connected to Burton's (2011) idea that reflection may be done at different times. Additionally, the different timing of the participants' thinking can also be connected to the instruction given by the researcher. As the participants were taking the microteaching class where the instructor was the researcher, there was a possibility that participants tried to please the instructor. While this can be the study's limitation, this also indicates that the participants were severe in doing reflective teaching.

In addition to the different time frames, how pre-service teachers do reflections can be explained based on the reflection level. Concerning the reflections' level, the findings indicate that teacher candidates' thoughts are still at a low level (Yost et al., 2000). In Jay and Johnson's (2002) typology, this low level of reflection can be categorized as a descriptive reflection. In this type of reflection, pre-service teachers just described the matter for consideration. The low level of reflection is possibly caused by pre-service teachers' limited experience in teaching and in doing thoughts. As all the participants are still learning to teach and had no experience before, experience the reviews apply theories and knowledge that they have studied in university. Additionally, since reflecting on their teaching in microteaching was the participants' first experience in doing reflections, they possibly still get confused with what to remember beyond just describing what they did in the classroom. It is also

possible that the participants are not accustomed to thinking critically yet, which contributes to how they reflect on their teaching.

Complementary to the timing and the level of reflection, the findings related to how the teacher candidates do reflections can also be analyzed in terms of the reflection's focus. In some ways, the findings of the current study yield a similar result with the previous research done by Walkington (2005). While in Walkington's (2005) study, the pre-service teachers focused their concerns on subject knowledge, teaching methodology, and obtaining respect from children and controlling children, in the current study, gaining respect and maintaining children were not part of the participants' concerns. Possibly this is because the present study only focused on the university setting where the students were the pre-service teachers' peers, and all were cooperative.

About the students' perception, the findings echo previous research on teachers' perceptions toward their reflective practices (Liu & Zhang, 2014; Valdez et al., 2018), in which all participants consider a reflection as a way to improve practice. This can be linked to the essence of reflection in which participants can evaluate their teaching and make improvements to their teaching practices (Nguyen & Ngo, 2018). As indicated in the findings, the pre-service teachers in the study acknowledged that through analyzing their teaching videos, they could see their teaching performance again and identify their strengths and weaknesses in their teaching. From that, they planned to make some changes in their next teaching performances. The findings align with what Richards and Lockhart (1996) exclaim that through journal writing, teachers can write their reactions toward what happens in the classroom and note ideas for future teaching actions. Additionally, the findings also reiterate previous research on pre-service teachers' reflection through the utilization of technology (Shoffner, 2009) in which the participants have a positive attitude toward their reflective practices. Yet, as the current study does not focus on the use of technology, the findings' similarities are mainly related to how pre-service teachers view a reflection for their teaching.

In brief, while the importance of reflection is acknowledged, EFL pre-service teachers' practice is still at the surface level. The findings of the current research provided insights that reflective practices among teacher candidates need to be improved.

CONCLUSION

The issue of reflection has become part of the crucial components of teachers' professional development. Yet, in the teacher education field, especially in the EFL context, reflective practices are not widely researched. The findings of the current study provide insights about pre-service teachers' understanding of the concept of reflective practice and how they perceive reflective activities. Despite their knowledge of the term, the participants in this study demonstrated that their ability to do reflections is still low. While they did reflections in different teaching stages, their thought centered around feeling, lesson planning, teaching materials, and methodology. The findings suggest that more research in teacher education, especially EFL pre-service teachers, needs to be conducted. Furthermore, since the current study is narrow in scope and only involved six participants, further research involving more participants and a more extensive study is vital to understand how pre-service teachers learn to do reflections on their teaching. Further research may also focus on following up these student teachers do their real teaching in school contexts.

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